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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Nasir's Present Political Position

1. The Nasir regime's continued involvement in Yemen and Syria has produced an unusual amount of dissatisfaction in Egypt. This dissatisfaction is growing among both government officials and the public.

2. The Egyptian public, traditionally apathetic with regard to foreign affairs, does not understand the reasons the regime gives for its costly adventures abroad. It does understand and resents, however, the alarming number of Egyptian soldiers lost in Yemen, the material cost of the war, and the fact that the Egyptians always seem to come out losers when dealing with the Syrians.

3. Egyptian officials charged with carrying out Nasir's ambitious economic program are disgruntled over cutbacks threatened by the cost of the Yemen war. Others, including some of the military, are reportedly unhappy over the length of the campaign in Yemen and the loss of Egyptian prestige incurred there and in the so far losing battle of words and agents to regain Syria. The criticisms by these officials have been startlingly frank, [redacted]

[redacted] some in Nasir's innermost circle of advisers are questioning the wisdom of trying to do so much abroad when so much needs to be done at home.

4. There is, however, no sign that this dissatisfaction has reached the intensity or has the organization necessary to threaten the regime's stability. Nasir is no doubt very much aware of public and official feeling and possesses

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the means for dealing with any threat. There is no evidence that the basic loyalty of the army and internal security forces is flagging.

5. Another abortive Nasir-backed coup attempt in Syria would stir another ripple of disapproval in Egypt. Prolongation of the Yemeni war would probably accentuate Egyptian domestic grumbling and unhappiness. A financial crisis growing out of the Yemen adventure--seemingly unavoidable without Western economic assistance--would intensify this discontent. Nevertheless, there appears to be no effective means for channeling this discontent against the regime. A serious threat to Nasir thus seems unlikely to arise in the foreseeable future.

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